

NAME: Kathryn Schaaf, SHRM-SCP
TITLE: HR Manager
COMPANY: Industrial Sales & Mfg., Inc. (ISM)
YEARS OF SERVICE: 3.5 years
WEBSITE: ismerie.com

WHY THIS PERSON DESERVES TO BE RECOGNIZED:

It is with great enthusiasm that I nominate Kathryn Schaaf for the HR Person of the Year award. In just the short time, less than 3 years, that Kathryn has been leading our Human Resources department, she has made a profound and lasting impact on our organization.

Since taking on her role, Kathryn has completely transformed the atmosphere within our company. What was once simply a workplace is now a true community. She has fostered a family-oriented environment where every employee feels like a valued member of the team. This shift in culture has been both noticeable and meaningful to every person here.

Kathryn consistently goes above and beyond to create an inclusive and engaging work environment. She has implemented a variety of thoughtful initiatives, team-building activities, employee appreciation programs, and other opportunities for staff to connect and feel recognized. These efforts have brought people closer together and strengthened our sense of unity and teamwork.

What truly sets Kathryn apart is her genuine commitment to listening to employees. She regularly seeks out input through surveys and open discussions, creating space for people to share their ideas, concerns, and feedback. She takes this input seriously, using it to drive meaningful change and continuously improve the workplace. Her openness to hearing others and acting on their suggestions has made employees feel heard and respected in a way that's truly rare.

Alongside her dedicated assistant Marje, Kathryn has made an extraordinary difference in an remarkably short amount of time. The culture shift she has led, the programs she has introduced, and the trust she has built speak volumes about her leadership and dedication.

For all these reasons and more, I wholeheartedly nominate Kathryn for HR Person of the Year. She demonstrates the very best of what an HR leader can be. She is empathetic, proactive, thoughtful, and truly invested in the people she serves.

BACKGROUND AND EDUCATION:

Kathryn is a UK-qualified Solicitor, having earned her Law Degree from the University of Leeds and a Postgraduate Diploma in Law from BPP Law School. Kathryn was admitted as a Solicitor to the Senior Courts of England and Wales in October 2010 and began her career in private practice as a Litigation Solicitor. In 2014, she joined the United Kingdom's Royal Air Force as a Legal Officer, where she served with distinction, including a deployment as the Operational Legal Advisor to the UK's Air Operations Campaign against ISIS in Iraq and Syria. Following completion of Air Warfare Training and leadership development at the prestigious Royal Air Force College Cranwell, she was promoted to Squadron Leader (equivalent to Major).

Her journey later brought her to the United States, where she discovered a true passion for Human Resources. In February 2024, she earned the SHRM-SCP certification, affirming her **commitment to strategic HR leadership.**

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT:

Kathryn currently serves on several local boards and advisory committees, including the Erie County Technical School Occupational Advisory Committee and Metal Fabrication Advisory Board; the Engineering and Industrial Technology Advisory Committee; and the Board of Directors for the Workforce Development Board of NWPJ Job Connect, where she also chairs the Workforce Solutions Committee and serves on the Governance Committee.

She also has contributed to the Erie County Community College Business Advisory Board, the EIT Program Advisory Committee, and regularly partners with local initiatives such as Erie Together and Career Street to promote careers in manufacturing and support workforce development.

In addition, she has led numerous workplace fundraising events in partnership with the incredible team at ISM, raising over \$11,000 for local organizations including the American Heart Association, Make-A-Wish (Erie), the St. Martin Center, and Parkinson Partners of NWPJ.

Nominated by Danielle Miklovic of ISM.